

through the regular family-based immigration channels.

I do not believe that it is in our Nation's best interest to force this family—including two U.S. citizen minor children—to make the choice between being separated and relocation to a country where they may face serious hardships.

The Tan family has built a stable and supportive home for themselves in the Pacifica, California community. Ms. Tan's spouse has worked for 17 years at Biddle-Shaw Insurance Services, Inc., where her employer describes her as "hard-working . . . trustworthy and dependable." This couple owns their own home, and over many years they were active members of the Good Shepherd Catholic Church. At Good Shepherd, Jay was a member of the School Board and Ms. Tan was a consummate volunteer. I received a heartfelt letter from the Pastor at Good Shepherd that describes Ms. Tan as a "dedicated mother" and attests to the family's spirit of volunteerism and commitment at the church.

In fact, I have received 45 letters from friends and community members and 3 letters from organizations, including the Human Rights Campaign, Love Exiles, and Immigration Equality, in support of Ms. Tan remaining in the U.S. I have also been contacted by Representative JACKIE SPEIER's office in support of this case. This family has also received substantial attention from the media in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Enactment of the legislation I am introducing on behalf of Ms. Tan today will enable this entire family to us continue to remain in the U.S. and make positive contributions to their community in Pacifica, California.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 867

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS FOR SHIRLEY CONSTANTINO TAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151), Shirley Constantino Tan shall be eligible for issuance of an immigrant visa or for adjustment of status to that of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence upon filing an application for issuance of an immigrant visa under section 204 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) or for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident.

(b) ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—If Shirley Constantino Tan enters the United States before the filing deadline specified in subsection (c), she shall be considered to have entered and remained lawfully and shall, if otherwise eligible, be eligible for adjustment of status under section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255) as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF FEES.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall

apply only if the application for issuance of an immigrant visa or the application for adjustment of status is filed with appropriate fees within 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) REDUCTION OF IMMIGRANT VISA NUMBER.—Upon the granting of an immigrant visa or permanent residence to Shirley Constantino Tan, the Secretary of State shall instruct the proper officer to reduce by one, during the current or next following fiscal year, the total number of immigrant visas that are made available to natives of the country of the alien's birth under section 203(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(a)) or, if applicable, the total number of immigrant visas that are made available to natives of the country of the alien's birth under section 202(e) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1152(e)).

CABRILLO SCHOOL,
Pacifica, CA, April 2, 2009.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Jaylynn Mercado and Shirley Tan are model parents to their 12-year-old twin boys, Jashley and Joriene. It is upsetting to hear that Shirley is being forced to leave the country and be separated from her family. Due to the dedication of these parents, Jashley and Joriene are ideal students. They are well liked by their peers and the faculty of the school. They are both exceptional students. Jaylynn and Shirley are always willing to help the school out in any way possible. They are committed to encouraging their children to do great things. Jaylynn and Shirley have modeled and taught their boys some of the finest traits of respect and compassion. It is my hope that this respect and compassion is returned to the Mercado Family.

Please do what is possible to keep this family intact. They are a lovely addition to our school community. Please contact me if there is any more help that I can give.

Sincerely,

MEGHANN ELSBERND.

CABRILLO SCHOOL,
Pacifica, CA, March 30, 2009.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: My name is Jared Katz and I am writing this letter in support of Shirley Mercado. I teach 6th grade at Cabrillo Elementary in Pacifica, California and last year I was fortunate to have Joriene and Jashley Mercado in my class. Both boys were exceptional students. They were on the honor roll, athletic, confident, and popular with their peers. Joriene and Jashley are the kinds of kids that make my job feel easy.

Once I got to know their family a little bit I immediately understood why the boys were so successful. Each year I see sixty-four different families, from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds, and I don't think I've ever seen a family as committed to each other as the Mercados. Being in a room with the four of them together it's impossible to not be envious of the strong bond between them and of the ease and comfort in the way they relate to one another. And from our first meeting it was obvious that Shirley is the center of their family's strength. When you talk to them together all the boys' actions revolve around her and as a member of our school community she is the model parent. She attends every conference, drives on field trips and consistently checks in with her boys teachers and the rest of our staff to make sure Joriene and Jashley continue to be successful.

When I heard the news this morning that she may be forced to leave the country and be separated from her family I was very shocked and saddened. If there's anything that can be done to help preserve her family I hope that it will be vigorously pursued.

And if there's anything I can do to help, please don't hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

JARED KATZ.

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD,
Pacifica, CA.

DEAR SENATOR FEINSTEIN, It is an honor for me to write this letter of support for one of your constituents, Ms. Shirley Tan. I am her Pastor here at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Pacifica. I have gotten to know Shirley and her partner Jay Mercado as well as their twin boys Jashley and Joriene. I have been closely connected with this family for the past 5 years. Shirley is a wonderful mother to her sons. She is always available, her gentle spirit and loving heart guiding all that she does as a parent. She and Jay want the best for their sons. They want the boys to grow in wisdom and knowledge and find their true and definite place in this world. They provide a warm and welcoming home, with their door open to family and neighbors (and even strangers!!) Shirley and Jay were school parents here until recently, when, they found a public school that better met the needs of their boys. While they were here at Good Shepherd, Jay was a faithful and responsible member of the School Board, and Shirley was the consummate volunteer . . . always willing and able to help out on campus, as a classroom aide, on special school projects, as a chaperone on field trips . . . Whenever there was a call for help from our Principal or from the School Office, without a moment's hesitation, Shirley would be one of the first to call and offer whatever assistance was needed at the time.

Jay and Shirley were also faithful members of one of our Sunday Mass choirs. Coming to church every week . . . being faithful members of a Christian community . . . being whole-hearted servants of God as ministers of music in this local church . . . bringing their two boys to mass every Sunday and encouraging them to become altar servers . . . Jay and Shirley have for all the time I have known them been wonderful Christian partners, parents, role models for their two boys, and, as Scripture says, "living stones" helping to form and to build up the Church, the Body of Christ, in today's broken and violent world.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to do to all that you can to assist Shirley and to help quickly and justly resolve her current legal situation.

Sincerely,

PIERS M. LAHEY,
Pastor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 108—COMMENDING CAPTAIN RICHARD PHILLIPS, THE CREW OF THE "MAERSK ALABAMA", AND THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES, RECOGNIZING THE GROWING PROBLEM OF PIRACY OFF SOMALIA'S COAST, AND URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO ADDRESS PIRACY AND ITS ROOT CAUSES

Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 108

Whereas Somalia has been without a functioning central government since 1991, resulting in lawlessness and an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation;

Whereas according to a Somali human rights group, violence during the period from 2007 to 2009 has killed an estimated 16,000 people, wounded more than 28,000 people, and displaced more than 1,000,000 people;

Whereas these grim conditions and the absence of a functioning government have made Somalia an ideal base for piracy operations and a fertile ground for terrorist organizations, including the group al-Shabaab, whose leaders have ties to al-Qaeda;

Whereas acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia have been on the rise for more than a year, with the International Maritime Bureau reporting an estimated 111 attacks in 2008;

Whereas on Wednesday, April 8, 2009, Somali pirates used grappling hooks and weapons to board the Norfolk, Virginia-based container ship Maersk Alabama, which was captained by Richard Phillips, a resident of Underhill, Vermont, and crewed by 19 other citizens of the United States, and which was delivering food aid from the World Food Programme to hungry people in east Africa;

Whereas Captain Phillips, a native of Winchester, Massachusetts and a 1979 graduate of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, bravely led the Maersk Alabama crew in successfully retaking control of the ship by offering himself as a hostage in exchange for the release of the crew;

Whereas 4 pirates took Captain Phillips into an 18-foot lifeboat, held him captive at gunpoint, and repeatedly threatened to kill him;

Whereas the United States Central Command dispatched to the scene the destroyer U.S.S. Bainbridge, which was joined in subsequent days by the U.S.S. Halyburton and the U.S.S. Boxer, along with Navy SEAL teams, Marine Corps helicopters, and other joint assets of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas hostage recovery experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation gave guidance to the crew of the U.S.S. Bainbridge, while the Department of State stayed in contact with Captain Phillips' family, including Phillips' wife Andrea and their 2 children, Daniel and Mariah, in Underhill, Vermont;

Whereas Maersk Limited, based in Norfolk, Virginia, worked diligently with the United States Armed Forces to try to obtain the release of Captain Phillips and the Maersk Alabama crew and to move the ship safely to port in Kenya, while sending personal representatives to Vermont to keep the Phillips family informed;

Whereas in the late evening of April 9, 2009, Captain Phillips made an escape attempt, jumping into the water of the Indian Ocean to swim for safety, only to be pursued by the pirates and quickly recaptured;

Whereas the President received regular briefings on the hostage crisis and provided the authority necessary for the United States Armed Forces to resolve it;

Whereas on April 12, 2009, Easter Sunday, Captain Phillips was rescued after the United States Armed Forces, which throughout the crisis spared no effort to defuse the situation and peacefully rescue Phillips, took the lives of 3 of the pirate captors when Phillips was seen to be in imminent danger; and

Whereas international commerce remains under threat while Somali pirates continue to hold for ransom more than 200 crew members of many nationalities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) Captain Phillips deserves the respect and admiration of all people of the United States for his brave conduct under life-threatening circumstances;

(2) the Senate shares the sense of relief and gratitude felt by the family and shipmates of Captain Phillips;

(3) all members of the United States Armed Forces involved in the rescue operation, in particular members of the Navy and Navy SEAL teams who rescued Captain Phillips, the officials of other Federal Government departments and agencies who contributed, and the crew of the Maersk Alabama, are to be commended for their exceptional efforts and devotion to duty; and

(4) the President should work with the international community and the transitional government of Somalia to develop a comprehensive strategy to address both the burgeoning problem of piracy and its root causes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 109—COMMENDING THE BRAVERY OF THE GIRLS WHO ATTEND THE MIRWAIS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 109

Whereas, on November 12, 2008, 15 girls who attend the Mirwais School for Girls in Kandahar, Afghanistan, were attacked by militants and sprayed with acid, causing them varying degrees of disfigurement;

Whereas the militants committed the egregious attack to intimidate the girls and their families and to discourage the girls from continuing to attend school;

Whereas, less than one week after the attacks, Headmaster Mahmood Qadari asked parents to return the girls to school;

Whereas, by January 14, 2009, nearly 1,300 girls, almost all the students, had returned to the 40-room Mirwais School for Girls;

Whereas the families of the girls from the Mirwais School for Girls defy threats of personal harm and staunchly assert the right to educate their daughters;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, educating girls and women reduces the incidence of domestic and community violence and raises the standard of living in a country;

Whereas, according to a study published by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, it is a "fact that child marriage takes place in a frequent and pervasive fashion" in Afghanistan;

Whereas, according to that study, of women surveyed for the study, 43.6 percent stated that they married to solve their economic problems, 7.1 percent referred to the resolution of conflicts as the reason for their early marriage, 37 percent said that "badal", or the exchange of girls between 2 families, was the reason for their marriage, and 12.3 percent cited other reasons for their marriage, such as local traditional practices and parental interference;

Whereas, according to 2007 information from the World Health Organization, the health of women and children in Afghanistan is among the worst in the world;

Whereas, according to estimates from the Department of State for 2008, the literacy rate for women in Afghanistan is 12 percent;

Whereas it is a continuing priority of the United States government to advance the rights of women in Afghanistan by facilitating women's participation in social, polit-

ical, and economic affairs and by ensuring women's safety and well-being;

Whereas the United States Government looks to the government of Afghanistan to proactively support the rights of women and girls, and recognizes that the recently-passed personal security law would severely diminish such rights;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has integrated women-focused activities into most of its programs by strategic design, with the goal of increasing women's political participation and access to education, health care, economic opportunities, and roles in civil society;

Whereas USAID has noted that, despite women's nearly non-existent access to health, education, and political participation in 2001, there has been a 25 percent decrease in maternal mortality since 2001, due in great part to women's significantly improved access to health and hospital services;

Whereas, since 2001, Afghanistan has experienced a surge in school attendance to more than 6,000,000 children enrolled, of which 35 percent are girls, and has greatly increased participation of women in civil society, with women representing 26 percent of the civil service and holding 27 percent of the seats in the national assembly and 29 percent of provincial council seats; and

Whereas, despite significant gains made through assistance programs in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, there remains a great deal more work to be done toward achieving reasonable development in still one of the poorest countries in the world, and such development can be achieved only by empowering the 50 percent of the population that is women: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the extraordinary bravery shown by the girls and families of the Mirwais School for Girls in Kandahar, Afghanistan, especially the girls injured in the November 2008 attack, in the decision to return to school in the face of threats of bodily injury, or worse; and

(2) continues to support efforts to decrease illiteracy and gender-based violence in Afghanistan.

SENATE RESOLUTION 110—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TAR HEELS BASKETBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2008-2009 NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mrs. HAGAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 110

Whereas on April 6, 2009, the University of North Carolina defeated Michigan State University 89-72 to win the 2008-2009 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men's basketball national championship;

Whereas the University of North Carolina was the consensus preseason number 1 basketball team in the Nation;

Whereas the University of North Carolina Tar Heels were saddled with a tremendous amount of pressure to get to the NCAA Final Four and win the national championship in 2009;

Whereas after the Tar Heels' 0-2 record to start the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) regular season, the team finished with a record of 13-3 and won 13 out of their last 14 games in conference;